

April 20, 2010

The Honorable John Kerry
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Joseph Lieberman
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lindsey Graham
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators:

As the Senate considers energy and climate change legislation, we urge you to fully support the use of biomass for energy as a means to help our nation meet its renewable energy and climate change goals. We strongly urge you to include a broad renewable biomass definition that is consistent across all relevant federal programs, similar to that of the 2008 Farm Bill (plus mill residues and byproducts and excluding commonly recycled paper), and to include the appropriate recognition of the carbon benefits of biomass energy in any legislation developed for Senate deliberations.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, a broad definition for renewable biomass, such as contained in the 2008 Farm Bill (which is substantially similar to the Waxman-Markey bill language), is a common sense and practical approach that enables biomass participation in emerging markets and provides economic options to help preserve working farms and forests on the landscape and the many public benefits they provide. We strongly support this view and urge that the expert opinion of USDA be reflected in national policy. We also urge that biomass definitions not impose restrictions that would foreclose market opportunities or introduce new federal regulation of public and private lands.

We also strongly urge that the full carbon benefits of renewable energy from biomass be appropriately acknowledged in national policy. Unlike fossil fuels, which emit carbon into the atmosphere from geologic sources that are not renewable, carbon associated with the combustion of biomass is part of a natural cycle that maintains a carbon balance by removing carbon emissions from the atmosphere through natural processes, like photosynthesis, and stores the carbon in plants, trees and soil. This balance is reflected in contemporary and widely-accepted science acknowledging that combustion of biomass for energy in countries like the United States does not increase atmospheric carbon as overall carbon growing stocks remain stable or increasing. It is also embedded in the policies and analysis of the Environmental Protection Agency, the Energy Information Agency and other authoritative and credible government and non-government organizations.

We look forward to engaging on the important task of helping our nation increase its capability to produce domestic, renewable sources of low carbon biomass energy. We are confident that, by working together, we can achieve this goal in a manner that supports the contributions of working farms and forests, appropriately recognizes the full carbon benefits they provide, and maintains them as a viable source of our renewable energy portfolio in the long term.

Sincerely,

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ADAGE

Alabama Agribusiness Council
Alabama Forestry Association
American Forest and Paper Association
American Forest Foundation
American Forest Resource Council
American Loggers Council
Arkansas Forestry Association
Associated California Loggers
Associated Oregon Loggers, Inc.
Association of Consulting Foresters of
America
Association of Equipment Manufacturers
Avista Corporation
Biomass Coordinating Council,
American Council on Renewable
Energy
Biomass Power Association
Biomass Thermal Energy Council
BlueFire Ethanol Fuels, Inc.
Boone & Crockett Club
California Forestry Association
Catch-A-Dream Foundation
Ceres, Inc.
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
Coskata
Duke Energy
Energy Corporation
Environmental Federation of Oklahoma
Family Forest Foundation
FirstEnergy Corporation
Florida Farm Bureau Federation
Florida Forestry Association
Forest Landowners Association
Forest Landowners Tax Council

Forest Products Industry National Labor
Management Committee
Forest Resources Association Inc.
Frontier Renewable Resources
Georgia Forestry Association
GMO Renewable Resources
Hancock Timber Resource Group
Hardwood Federation
Idaho Forest Group
John Deere
KL Energy Corporation
Longview Timber
Louisiana Forestry Association
Michigan Association of Timbermen
Michigan Forest Products Council
Minnesota Forest Industries
Mississippi Biomass and Renewable
Energy Council
Mississippi Forestry Association
Montana Logging Association
N.C. Association of Professional
Loggers, Inc.
National Alliance of Forest Owners
National Association of Conservation
Districts
National Association of Counties
National Association of Forest Service
Retirees
National Association of State Foresters
National Association of University Forest
Resources Programs
National Association of Wheat Growers
National Farmers Union
National Forest Counties and Schools
Coalition
National Woodland Owners Association

New York Biomass Energy Alliance
North American Bear Foundation
North Carolina Forestry Association
Northern Arizona Loggers Association
Oregon Forest Industries Council
Oregon Small Woodlands Association
Pingree Associates
Plum Creek
Port Blakely Tree Farms, LP
Professional Logging Contractors of Maine
Quality Deer Management Association
Range Fuels
Rayonier, Inc.
Reiver Forest Products
Resource Management Service, LLC
RMK Timberland Group
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Shull Timber Corporation
Society of American Foresters
South Carolina Forestry Association
Southeastern Lumber Manufacturers Association
Tennessee Forestry Association
Texas Forestry Association
The Lyme Timber Company
The Molpus Woodlands Group
The Westervelt Company
Virginia Forest Products Association
Virginia Loggers Association
Washington Contract Loggers Association, Inc.
Washington Farm Forestry Association
Washington Forest Protection Association
Wells Timberland
Weyerhaeuser Company
Wildlife Mississippi
Woodlands Carbon Company
Xcel Energy